



January 2002

## Important Health Benefits News for Benefits Administrators

## Upcoming Events

### JAN

**Jan. 9** ♦ General Assembly  
convenes for 8-week session  
**Jan. 18** ♦ Lee-Jackson Holiday  
**Jan. 21** ♦ Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Holiday

### FEB

**February 15** ♦ Copy developed  
for Spotlight newsletter and  
materials for spring Open  
Enrollment  
**February 18** ♦ President's Day  
Holiday  
**February 20** ♦ Trigon Provider  
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Management

# B.A. Bulletin

## Health Care Costs To Impact Program for July 1

Health care costs, fueled by increases in prescription drug costs and increased use of medical services, continue to rise nationally and are impacting employers, including the Commonwealth. For fiscal year 2001:

- Claims expenses for Key Advantage and Cost Alliance were up 17 percent.
- Prescription drug costs rose 24 percent, and represented 20.6 percent of total claims for Key Advantage and Cost Alliance.

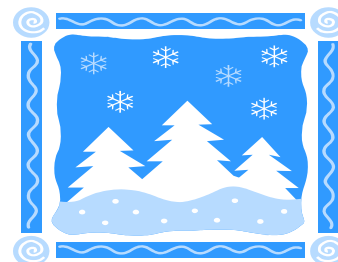
As we plan for July 1, 2002, we are looking at ways to manage the higher costs for providing health benefits to employees and retirees. Our commitment is to continue to offer an excellent benefits package at the lowest possible cost.

## 2002 Open Enrollment Period Set

One Open Enrollment period for health benefits will be held in 2002. Employees at all agencies, including colleges and universities, will be able to change plans or membership from April 15 to May 15, 2002. Additional details will follow in the spring.

## Rural Route Addresses

In many rural areas of Virginia, the United States Postal Service is no longer accepting addresses with route or rural route numbers. Please advise employees that they must have a correct street address to receive mailings in a timely manner.



## Contacting the Ombudsman and Employee Services

- **Address:** Employee Services, Office of Health Benefits, 101 N. 14<sup>th</sup> Street, 13<sup>th</sup> Floor, Richmond, VA 23219.
- **E-mail address for Employee Services:** EeSvc@dhrm.state.va.us.
- **E-mail address for appeals:** Appeals@dhrm.state.va.us.
- **Appeals** must be in writing.

## Effective Dates For Double State Membership

When state employees married to each other select Double State membership, both employees sign Part F of the Enrollment/Waiver Form. One spouse pays for reduced Family membership and the other waives coverage. Reminder: The effective date of coverage is based on the first date the form is received from either one of the employees. Upon receipt, a copy of the form should be sent to the other agency involved, if applicable.

**Example:** Joe is paying the premium and Mary is waiving. Joe's agency receives the form on March 18, within 31 days, while Mary's agency receives it on April 5, still within 31 days. The effective date of coverage would be April 1.